

CLAIMS

1. (Currently amended) An automated self-storage management system for enabling a user to conduct self-storage transactions, the system comprising:

a business network of a plurality of self-storage facilities, wherein the user is personnel of each self-storage facility and uses the business network to access inventory information and customer information of the plurality of self-storage facilities to generate reports for managing the operation of each self-storage facility;

a server using an inventory information capture having a room inventory database and accessible to the user via a computer-terminal coupled to the server, wherein the room inventory database includes information pertaining to self-storage units located in one or more the plurality of self-storage facilities of the business network;

the server using a customer information capture in communication with the inventory information capture, accessible to the user via the computer-terminal coupled to the server, and having information pertaining to customers of the plurality of self-storage facilities of the business network; and

the server using a reporting feature in communication with the inventory information capture and the customer information capture and accessible to the user via the computer-terminal coupled to the server, wherein the reporting feature extracts and analyzes information from the room inventory database pertaining to self-storage units located in the plurality of self-storage facilities of the business network and extracts and analyzes information from the customer information capture pertaining to customers and generates includes means for generating reports for managing the operation of the storage facility, including reports for revenue, unit availability, reservations, open contracts, rent rolls and credit card information.

2. (Currently amended) An automated self-storage management system for enabling a user to conduct self-storage transactions, the system comprising:

a business network of a plurality of self-storage facilities, wherein the user is personnel of each self-storage facility and uses the business network to access inventory information and customer information of the plurality of self-storage facilities to generate reports for managing the operation of each self-storage facility;

a server using an inventory information capture having a room inventory database and accessible to the user via a computer-terminal coupled to the server, wherein the room inventory database includes information pertaining to self-storage units located in one or more the plurality of self-storage facilities of the business network;

the server using a customer information capture in communication with the inventory information capture, accessible to the user via the computer-terminal coupled to the server, and having information pertaining to customers of the plurality of self-storage facilities of the business network;

wherein one or both of the inventory information capture and customer information capture include information for managing the operation of the plurality of self-storage facilities, including information on revenue, cash summaries, unit availability, facility utilization, reservations, open contracts, rent rolls and credit card information; and

the server using a rental transaction feature in communication with the inventory information capture and customer information capture and accessible to the user via the computer-terminal coupled to the server, wherein the rental transaction feature creates a rental agreement using information from the inventory information capture and the customer information capture, and wherein the rental agreement involves a plurality of self-storage units.

3. (Withdrawn) An automated self-storage management system for enabling a user to conduct self-storage transactions, the system comprising:

an inventory information capture having information pertaining to self-storage units;

a customer information capture having information pertaining to customers; and

an automatic payment feature in communication with the inventory information capture

and customer information capture, the automatic payment feature having a credit card information capture to receive information regarding a credit card to be charged, wherein the automatic payment feature periodically applies rental charges to the credit card.

4. (Canceled)

5. (Withdrawn) An automated self-storage management system for enabling a user to conduct self-storage transactions, the system comprising:

an inventory information capture having information pertaining to self-storage units; a customer information capture having information pertaining to customers;

a rental transaction feature in communication with the inventory information capture and the customer information capture; and

a rate setting feature in communication with the inventory information capture, wherein the rate setting feature communicates a rental rate to the inventory information capture.

6. (Original) The automated self-storage management system of claim 2 wherein the customer information capture includes an authorized access identifier.

7. (Original) The automated self-storage management system of claim 2 wherein the customer information capture includes an emergency contact identifier.

8. (Original) The automated self-storage management system of claim 2 wherein the customer information capture includes a payment history.

9. (Original) The automated self-storage management system of claim 2 wherein the customer information capture includes a credit card identifier.

10. (Original) The automated self-storage management system of claim 2 wherein the plurality of storage units comprises a first storage unit and a second storage unit, an automatic payment feature applied to the first storage unit, and an invoicing feature applied to the second storage unit.

11. (Previously presented) The automated self-storage management system of claim 2 comprising a transfer feature that transfers a customer from an occupied self-storage unit to a

vacant self-storage unit.

12. (Original) The automated self-storage management system of claim 11 comprising a fee calculator that calculates a prorated rent for the occupied room and a prorated rent for the vacant room.

13. (Original) The automated self-storage management system of claim 1 wherein the reporting feature includes an audit report.

14. (Original) The automated self-storage management system of claim 1 wherein the reporting feature includes a cash intake report.

15. (Original) The automated self-storage management system of claim 1 wherein the reporting feature comprises data configured to be exported to an external financial database.

16. (Original) The automated self-storage management system of claim 2 wherein the inventory information capture comprises a map.

17. (Original) The automated self-storage management system of claim 1 wherein the reporting feature comprises a receipt for self-storage transactions.

18. (Original) The automated self-storage management system of claim 1 wherein the reporting feature comprises a vacancy report.

19. (Previously presented) The automated self-storage management system of claim 1 wherein the reporting feature comprises a facility utilization report including facility revenue and occupancy information for evaluating the effect of a rental rate change on facility revenue.

20. (Original) The automated self-storage management system of claim 2 further comprising a communication feature configured to allow communication between users.

21. (Original) The automated self-storage management system of claim 2 further comprising a letter generation feature.

22. (Original) The automated self-storage management system of claim 21 wherein upon occurrence of a predetermined criteria, the system generates a customer letter.

23. (Original) The automated self-storage management system of claim 22 wherein the letter pertains to an overdue fee.

24. (Original) The automated self-storage management system of claim 22 wherein the letter pertains to a rate increase.

25. (Original) The automated self-storage system of claim 22 wherein the letter pertains to an eviction.

26. (Withdrawn) An automated self-storage management system for enabling a user to conduct self-storage transactions, the system comprising:

an inventory information capture having information pertaining to self-storage units; a customer information capture having information pertaining to customers; and

an auction manager feature in communication with inventory information capture and customer information capture.

27. (Withdrawn) The automated management system of claim 26 wherein the auction manager comprises a customer notifier that generates a notice to customers regarding an auction.

28. (Withdrawn) The automated management system of claim 26 wherein the auction manager comprises a facility notifier that generates a notice to a plurality of facilities regarding an auction.

29. (Withdrawn) An automated self-storage management system for enabling a user to conduct self-storage transactions, the system comprising:

an inventory information capture having information pertaining to self-storage units; a customer information capture having information pertaining to customers; and

an auction manager feature in communication with inventory information capture and customer information capture, wherein the auction manager comprises a customer notifier that generates a notice to customers regarding an auction and a facility notifier that generates a notice to a plurality of facilities regarding an auction.

30. (Currently amended) An automated self-storage management system for enabling a user to conduct self-storage transactions, the system comprising:

a business network of a plurality of self-storage facilities, wherein the user is personnel of each self-storage facility and uses the business network to access inventory information and customer information of the plurality of self-storage facilities to generate reports for managing the operation of each self-storage facility;

a server using an inventory information capture having a room inventory database and accessible to the user via a computer-terminal coupled to the server, wherein the room inventory database includes information pertaining to self-storage units located in the plurality of self-storage facilities of the business network;

the server using a customer information capture in communication with the inventory information capture, accessible to the user via the computer-terminal coupled to the server, and having information pertaining to customers of the plurality of self-storage facilities of the business network;

the server using a rental transaction feature in communication with the inventory information capture and customer information capture and accessible to the user via the computer-terminal coupled to the server and configured to create a rental agreement using information ~~from~~ from the inventory information capture and the customer information capture, wherein the rental agreement involves a plurality of self-storage units, and

the server using a reporting feature in communication with the inventory information capture and the customer information capture and accessible to the user via the computer-terminal coupled to the server, wherein the reporting feature extracts and analyzes information from the room inventory database pertaining to self-storage units located in the plurality of self-storage facilities of the business network and extracts and analyzes information from the customer information capture pertaining to customers and generates ~~includes means for~~ generating reports for managing the operation of the storage facility, including reports for revenue, cash summaries, unit availability, facility utilization, reservations, open contracts, rent rolls and credit card information.